



# **CO5000 Intro to Christian Counseling**

## **PT5350 Pastoral Counseling**

### **3 Credit Hours**

Fall 2026  
Mondays 1:00-4:00 PM  
August 24 – November 30, 2026  
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte

#### **Professor Information**

Dr. Jim Newheiser  
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Associate Professor of Christian Counseling  
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**Office:** Counseling Offices/Front of Chapel  
**Office hours:** By Appointment

#### **TA/Assistants**

Olivia Schneider (Newheiser)  
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#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to biblical (pastoral) counseling from a distinctly Reformed theological framework. It establishes the biblical foundations that shape a faithful counseling methodology, contrasts biblical counseling with competing approaches, and demonstrates how theology informs pastoral practice/counseling. The course introduces core counseling skills and applies them to common counseling concerns, including conflict, anger, fear, anxiety, depression, and suffering, with emphasis on the wise and faithful application of Scripture in church and parachurch settings.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Articulate the biblical and theological foundations of a Reformed approach to counseling
- B. Evaluate and distinguish biblical counseling from other approaches to soul care
- C. Apply Scripture to personal growth and self-counsel in Christ
- D. Demonstrate a basic methodology for biblical pastoral counseling
- E. Employ Scripture wisely in addressing common pastoral counseling concerns

## COURSE MATERIALS

### Books:

1. Adams, Jay. *Competent to Counsel*, Zondervan, 1970 (270 pages)
  - a. Available as Free E-book via RTS Library EBSCO
1. Eswine, Zach. *Spurgeon's Sorrows*; Christian Focus, 2014 (143 pages)
2. Evans, Keith A. *Counseling & Extrabiblical Methods: Maintaining Fidelity to Scripture in Soul Care*, ACBC, 2026. (26 pages)
3. Greggo and Sisemore. *Counseling and Christianity Five Approaches*, IVP (250 pages)
  - a. Available as Free E-book via RTS Library EBSCO
4. Newheiser, Jim. *Help! I Want to Change* Mini Book, Shepherd Press, 2014 (57 pages)
5. Newheiser, Jim. *Help! My Anger is out of Control* Mini Book, Shepherd Press, 2015 (57 pages)
6. Sande, Ken. *The Peacemaker*, Baker Books, 2004 (318 pages)
7. Tripp, Paul. *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hand*, P&R (376 pages)

### Articles: \*Provided on Canvas\*

1. Articles from the Journal of Biblical Counseling (JBC):
  - a. Powlison, David. *Affirmations and Denials, A proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling*, JBC 19.1 (2000), 18-25 (8 pages)
  - b. Powlison, David. *The Ambiguously Cured Soul*, JBC 19, no. 3 (2001).
  - c. Powlison, David. *Critiquing Modern Integrationists*, JBC 11.3, 24-34 (11 pages)
  - d. Powlison, David. *Cure of the Souls (and Modern Psychologies)*, Part 2, JBC 25.2, 13-20 (8 pages)
  - e. Powlison, David. *Pastor as Counselor*, JBC 26.1, 23-39 (17 pages)
2. Powlison, Welch, Hurley and Berry. *Dialog between Biblical Counselors and Integrationists*, Journal of Psychology and Christianity, Winter 1997 (78 pages)
3. Alexander, Archibald. *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, Chapter 4 on "Melancholy," 32-50 (19 pages)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Reading Report

The expectation is that students will read every word of these books and articles to receive full reading credit. Students will be graded based on their self-reporting according to the following rubric:

|  |                                           |
|--|-------------------------------------------|
|  | Percentage of the book read word-for-word |
|  | Percentage of the book skimmed            |
|  | Read by due date (Yes or No)              |

The Reading Report is located in the Files tab on Canvas and must be filled out, signed, scanned, and uploaded by the due date. Digital signatures will also suffice. There will be a small penalty if the reading is not completed by the due dates. Not doing the reading will result in more significant penalties. Reports submitted late or students who must be reminded

to submit their report will suffer an academic penalty. Reading due dates are indicated in the Class Schedule, located at the bottom of the syllabus.

## **2. Reading Interaction Papers**

Students are to turn in a two page-double spaced paper, for *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*. State the percentage read at the top of the response paper: 1. Percentage of the book read, word-for- word; 2. Percentage of the book skimmed. Then for the paper itself, page one will consist of a summary of the salient points of the book. Capture the thesis as well as the main points of the author's argument. Write it in such a way that if the author of the book read your summary, he could agree you understood what he was saying. Page two will simply be your personal interaction with the book—was it useful to you, is it applicable in your ministry, were there things you found helpful or troubling, etc. This 2-page report will be due halfway through the course at the deadline stated on Canvas.

For Archibald Alexander's chapter on Melancholy, a one-page, double-spaced summary of the author's argument should be uploaded to Canvas prior to the in-class discussion on the topic of depression.

## **3. Personal Growth Project (Self-counseling)**

Choose a personal area in which you would like to grow. Develop a plan for change and implement your plan. The area for growth could include a qualification for eldership (1Tim 3 and Titus 1), an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5), or an area of pastoral counseling in which you need to improve. Find resources that speak to your issue – audios, mini-books, journal articles and books. Write a **one-page summary** to be turned in near the beginning of the semester outlining the problem and what resources you intend to use.

Write a **four-page report** to be turned in towards the end of the semester on how you have seen your thinking and actions change over the course of the semester with specific reference to how the resources you selected impacted you.

## **4. My View on Counseling Paper**

At the beginning of the semester students will write a two-page paper (double-spaced) on their view of the practice of counseling in the local church and what they hope to get out of this course.

## **5. How My Views Developed Paper**

At the end of the semester, students will write a five-page paper (double-spaced) on how their counseling views have developed. This paper should address issues including the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling, when and to whom to refer counselees, and the role of the church in counseling.

## **6. Website Review**

Spend at least 1 hour each in browsing the following websites – CCEF, Biblical Counseling Coalition, ACBC, and IBCD. Write a two-page summary of what specific resources you have found that a pastor or counselor could utilize.

## **7. Final Exam**

Final exam questions will be taken from the ACBC Counseling exam. The exam will be offered as a take home exam and should be completed in MS Word. The Bible will be the

only reference allowed during the exam. Students may not use the concordance or study notes in their Bibles during the exam. All answers should be well-supported with Scripture. The student should plan to spend the full three hours taking the exam. If extra time is needed, please still complete the exam in one sitting. No proctor is necessary.

*Final Exam Questions:* ACBC Counseling exam questions 1–2, 4–8, 11, 13–15, plus possible extra questions from lectures and/or case studies.

\*Please complete the exam in the format provided on Canvas. Students may need to do research outside of class lectures in preparation to answer the questions from the ACBC exam.

## **8. Class Participation**

It is required that students be present for all class sessions. If a student is “providentially hindered” from attending class, if possible, please notify the instructor. It is expected that students will keep current in their reading and assignments. Failure to comply with these standards will result in grade reduction, unless other arrangements have been made. During the semester, students will be expected to actively participate in class discussions.

## **GRADING**

- |                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| • Required reading               | 15%           |
| • Reading Interaction Papers     | 10%           |
| • Papers and Written Assignments | 20% (5% each) |
| • Exam                           | 45%           |
| • Class participation            | 10%           |

\*All papers and exams must be uploaded in MS Word format.

## **NUTS AND BOLTS**

### **Extensions Policy for Assignments**

In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of up to one week may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of more than one week must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline. No retrospective extensions will be granted.

### **RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology and Internet Usage**

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student’s own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby

students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Student.

### **Note on Registration**

If you are a counseling student, please register for this class as Intro to Christian Counseling (CO5000) to meet your degree requirement.

If you are an MDiv student, please register for this class as Pastoral Counseling (PT5350) to meet your degree requirement.

### **ACBC Certification**

RTS offers the opportunity to be certified through the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). If you choose the ACBC track, you can meet all of the requirements for ACBC certification through your core counseling classes with little to no additional work.

We highly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. ACBC is well known and respected for their commitment to train church leaders and laypeople to offer biblical care and counsel.

If you would like to learn more about how to be certified through RTS, please email our Counseling Office Administrator at [counseling.charlotte@rts.edu](mailto:counseling.charlotte@rts.edu) for more information.

To learn more about the benefits of ACBC certification and their commitments as an organization, [click here](#).

## Class Schedule (Subject to Change/Adjustment)

| Assignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Due Date                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Introduction: Counseling in the Church<br>Psychology and Christian Counseling (Part 1)<br><b>Assignment:</b> My View of Counseling Paper (2 pages)                                                                                              | August 24               |
| Character of the Counselor<br>Trends in Biblical Counseling<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>Competent to Counsel</i><br><b>Assignment:</b> Personal Growth Project Plan                                                                                   | August 31<br>(Evans)    |
| No Class – Labor Day                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | September 7             |
| Psychology and Christian Counseling (Part 2) (with Gloria Video)<br>What is Biblical Counseling (with Adams' video)<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>Counseling and Christianity: Five Approaches</i>                                                      | September 14            |
| Theological Foundations for Counseling<br><b>Reading:</b> Journal Articles plus Dialogue                                                                                                                                                        | September 21<br>(Evans) |
| Counseling Methodology (Part 1 and 2)<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands</i> (p. 1-182)                                                                                                                                  | September 28<br>(Evans) |
| No Class – Fall Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | October 5-9             |
| Sola Scriptura—The Sufficiency of Scripture<br>Common Grace Wisdom and Counseling<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands</i> (p. 183-354)<br><b>Assignment:</b> <i>Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands</i> Interaction Paper | October 12              |
| Nature and Nurture in Counseling<br>How People Change<br><b>Reading:</b> Newheiser mini books                                                                                                                                                   | October 19              |
| Fear, Worry, and Depression<br><b>Reading:</b> Spurgeon's Sorrows<br><b>Assignment:</b> Website Review Paper (2 pages)                                                                                                                          | October 26<br>(Evans)   |
| 8 I's (Love-Know-Speak-Do) and Anger<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>Thoughts on Religious Experience</i><br><b>Assignment:</b> Thoughts on Religious Experience Interaction Paper                                                                        | November 2              |
| Biblical Peacemaking<br><b>Reading:</b> <i>The Peacemaker</i>                                                                                                                                                                                   | November 9              |
| Temptation and Trials                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | November 16             |
| Observation Videos<br><b>Assignment:</b> Personal Growth Report (4 pages)                                                                                                                                                                       | November 23             |
| Practice Counseling<br><b>Assignment:</b> How My Counseling Views Have Developed Paper (5 pages)                                                                                                                                                | November 30<br>(Evans)  |
| <b>Reading Report Due</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | December 5              |
| <b>Final Exam Period</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | December 3-8            |

### **Additional Resources (Not Required)**

1. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* - Ed Welch
2. *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* - David Powlison
3. *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* - Heath Lambert
4. *Blame it on the Brain: Distinguishing Chemical Imbalances, Brain Disorders, and Disobedience* - Ed Welch
5. *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling: Changing Lives with God's Changeless Truth* - Kelleman and Viars
6. *Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* - Jay Adams
7. *Counseling: How to Counsel Biblically* - John MacArthur and Wayne Mack
8. *Depression: Looking Up from the Stubborn Darkness* - Ed Welch
9. *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives* - Kelleman
10. The Standards of Conduct for The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors
11. **Forms for counselors** (available in the [MACC Library](#) – Login with RTS account).
12. **The Journal of Biblical Counseling Archive: CCEF**

### Course Objectives Related to MACC Student Learning Outcome

Course: Intro to Christian Counseling (CO5000)  
 Professors: Jim Newheiser and Keith Evans  
 Campus: Charlotte  
 Date: August 24 – November 30, 2026

| <b><u>MACC Student Learning Outcomes</u></b><br>In order to measure the success of the MACC curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MACC outcomes. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b><u>Rubric</u></b><br>➤ Strong<br>➤ Moderate<br>➤ Minimal<br>➤ None | <b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Articulation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, cultural/global, and counseling-related information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.                                                                                                                                           | <b>Strong</b>                                                         | Student must integrate hermeneutics, biblical exposition, theological themes, historical information, cultural familiarity, and verbal skills in communicating the message of Scripture. |
| <b>Counseling Knowledge</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Demonstrates knowledge of counseling theories and modern anthropology.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Strong</b>                                                         | The class compares various secular and Christian counseling approaches with biblical counseling.                                                                                         |
| <b>Counseling Skill</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Ability to apply biblical truths and common-grace insights in church-based counseling settings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Strong</b>                                                         | The class extensively addresses these important topics.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Scripture</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) | <b>Moderate</b>                                                       | Student must understand the original meaning of Scripture through the use of the original language and be able to apply it in counsel the text.                                          |
| <b>Reformed Theology</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Moderate</b>                                                       | Texts have theological messages that must be communicated to God's people.                                                                                                               |
| <b>Sanctification</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Minimal</b>                                                        | Counseling itself is a sanctifying process that should remind the student of complete dependence on God.                                                                                 |
| <b>Winsomely Reformed</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)                                                                                                       | <b>Minimal</b>                                                        | Emphasizes a winsome approach to counseling, including the presentation of the truth of the gospel and the word of God to those who may not agree.                                       |



### Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Pastoral Counseling (PT5350)  
 Professors: Jim Newheiser and Keith Evans  
 Campus: Charlotte  
 Date: August 24 – November 30, 2026

| <b>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</b><br><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i><br><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Rubric</b><br>➤ Strong<br>➤ Moderate<br>➤ Minimal<br>➤ None | <b>Mini-Justification</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.                                        | <b>Strong</b>                                                  | Student must integrate hermeneutics, biblical exposition, theological themes, historical information, cultural familiarity, and verbal skills in communicating the message of Scripture. |
| <b>Scripture</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) | <b>Moderate</b>                                                | Student must understand the original meaning of Scripture through the use of the original language and be able to apply it in counsel the text.                                          |
| <b>Reformed Theology</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Moderate</b>                                                | Texts have theological messages that must be communicated to God's people.                                                                                                               |
| <b>Sanctification</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Minimal</b>                                                 | Counseling itself is a sanctifying process that should remind the student of complete dependence on God.                                                                                 |
| <b>Worldview</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Minimal</b>                                                 | This is one of the goals of counseling and so should be a desire of the counselor.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Winsomely Reformed</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)                                                                                                       | <b>Minimal</b>                                                 | Emphasizes a winsome approach to counseling, including the presentation of the truth of the gospel and the word of God to those who may not agree.                                       |
| <b>Pastoral Ministry</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.                                                                                                              | <b>Minimal</b>                                                 | Knowledge and experience about counseling will enhance the preachers ability to create sermons which are relevant and applicable.                                                        |